

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12 MCT-01
HA-05 /091 W

-----052513 091837Z /45

O R 091710Z MAY 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7250
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 931

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: WA, SF, PORG
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: BOTHA'S ASSISTANT DISCUSSES THE RAID AND
SAG POLICY

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA'S ADIE TOLD US TODAY
(MAY 9) THAT THERE WAS A "GREAT ERUPTION" WITHIN THE GOVERN-
MENT OVER THE DECISION TO LAUNCH THE ANGOLAN RAID. HE SAID THE
SAG WOULD RETALIATE AGAINST ANY FURTHER SWAPO PROVOCATIONS BUT
HE EMPHASIZED THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD NO PLANS FOR FURTHER
ACTIONS, MILITARY OR POLITICAL, THAT COULD PREJUDICE THE
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SETTLEMENT PROSPECTS. ALTHOUGH SOME MIGHT HOPE FOR FAILURE
OF THE WESTERN PROPOSAL, HE SAID, THE HIGHEST LEVEL WAS COMMITTED
TO THE PROPOSAL AND THE SAG WAS ALREADY PLANNING FOR ITS
IMPLEMENTATION. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR TAYLOR HAD LUNCH TODAY,
MAY 9, WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA'S AIDE, NEIL VAN

HEERDEN. TAYLOR EMPHASIZED THE SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS WHICH SOUTH AFRICA'S MAY 4 RAID INTO ANGOLA HAS CREATED. THE RAID, HE SAID, HAD TAKEN PLACE AT A MOST CRITICAL TIME AND HAD GIVEN SWAPO AN OCCASION TO BACK AWAY AND HAD MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO BRING THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES AROUND TO EXERTING SERIOUS PRESSURE ON SWAPO.

3. VAN HEERDEN SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT THE BACKGROUND TO THE RAID, INDICATING THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN APPROVED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER. HE PARTICULARLY STRESSED THAT THE RAID HAD "NOT BEEN ON THE HORIZON" AT THE TIME THE SAG ACCEPTED THE WESTERN PROPOSAL AND THAT THE DECISION TO MOVE WAS MADE ONLY LAST WEEK. HAVING BEEN FORCED TO SWALLOW SOUTH AFRICA'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL, HE SAID, LEADING "HAWKS" IN THE GOVERNMENT HAD SEIZED THE INITIATIVE IN TERMS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S SECURITY OBLIGATIONS DURING THE WAITING PERIOD. THE HARD-LINERS, HE SAID, HAD INSISTED IT WAS INTOLERABLE THAT SOUTH AFRICA, HAVING ACCEPTED THE PROPOSAL, SHOULD BE EXPECTED TO FOREBEAR INTENSIFIED SWAPO TERRORIST ACTIVITY. THE SITUATION, THEY ARGUED, WAS DETERIORATING AND IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO ACT TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENCE IN THIS PERIOD. IN ADDITION, THE MILITARY WANTED TO SHOW THEY WERE WILLING AND ABLE TO CARRY OUT OPERATIONS OF THIS SORT AGAINST SWAPO. THE MILITARY AND THEIR SUPPORTERS HAD WON THEIR POINT AND HENCEFORTH THE SAG WOULD, LIKE SWAPO, FOLLOW A POLICY OF "FIGHTING AND NEGOTIATING". THIS POLICY IS NOW CONFIDENTIAL

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ENTRENCHED, VAN HEERDEN ASSERTED, AND THERE IS NO WAY OF CHANGING IT, "NO MATTER WHAT WE ON THE FOREIGN POLICY SIDE MIGHT DO".

4. VAN HEERDEN SAID THE RAID ISSUE HAD CREATED "GREAT ERUPTIONS" WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT. PERSONAL DIVISIONS WERE CREATED, HE STATED, "WHICH WILL NEVER BE HEALED". "WE TRIED TO TURN THEM AROUND ON BOTH TIMING AND SCALE." THE RESPONSE OF THE HARD-LINERS WAS THAT THERE WAS NO GUARANTEE THAT WAITING ANOTHER WEEK WOULD SEE ANY CHANGE IN SWAPO'S POSITION AND THE INTERNATIONAL REACTION WOULD BE NO DIFFERENT WHETHER THE INCURSION WAS 50 OR 200 MILES.

5. TAYLOR STRESSED THAT ANY FURTHER SUCH ACTIONS WOULD HAVE GRAVE CONSEQUENCES. VAN HEERDEN RESPONDED THAT THERE WERE NO PLANS FOR ADDITIONAL ATTACKS; EVERY SINGLE SOUTH AFRICAN SOLDIER HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN AND THE PARATROOP UNIT INVOLVED HAD ALREADY LEFT SOUTH WEST AFRICA. ANY FURTHER ACTION, HE EMPHASIZED, WOULD DEPEND ON SWAPO PROVOCATIONS. IT WAS RECOGNIZED, HE SAID, THAT SWAPO MAY TRY TO HIT BACK IN ORDER TO REGAIN THE INITIATIVE. IF IT DOES, VAN HEERDEN ASSERTED, THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT

THE THE MILITARY WILL "WIPE THEM OFF THE FACE OF ANGOLA."
VAN HEERDEN ASKED WHAT WE WOULD HAVE SOUTH AFRICA DO IT
SWAPO CONTINUED TO STEP UP ITS TERRORIST ACTIVITIES.
TAYLOR REPLIED THAT SWAPO MAY NOW FEEL THAT IT HAS AN
ADDITIONAL MOTIVATION AS WELL AS A JUSTIFICATION FOR
STEPPED UP ACTION, BUT IN ANY EVENT THE SAG WOULD BE
EXPECTED TO CONSTRAIN ITS MILITARY ACTION TO WITHIN NAMIBIA.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 931

6. TAYLOR UNDERSCORED THAT THE SAG ACTION HAD RAISED
SERIOUS QUESTIONS IN MANY QUARTERS ABOUT THE SINCERITY
OF SOUTH AFRICA'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL. THERE WAS
CONCERN, HE SAID, THAT NOT ONLY MIGHT SOUTH AFRICA TAKE
FURTHER MILITARY ACTION, BUT THAT IT MIGHT MOVE AHEAD IN
SOME WAY ON THE POLITICAL FRONT. VAN HEERDEN SAID HE
COULD GIVE HIS PERSONAL WORD THAT THERE WAS NO PLAN OR
INTENTION TO TAKE ANY FURTHER UNILATERAL STEPS. SOME OF
THOSE IN THE MILITARY AND IN THE GOVERNMENT WHO HAD

INITIATED AND BACKED THE IDEA OF THE RAID, VAN HEERDEN SAID, MAY HOPE THAT THE ACTION WILL IN FACT UNDERMINE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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POSSIBILITY OF THE WESTERN PLAN SUCCEEDING. THIS WAS NOT, HOWEVER, THE INTENTION OF THE "HIGHEST LEVEL" IN THE GOVERNMENT. SAG POLICY, HE SAID, IS BASED ON THE EXPECTATION THAT THE WESTERN PROPOSAL WILL BE IMPLEMENTED. PLANS ARE ALREADY BEING DRAWN UP, HE ADDED, FOR A PHASED MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM NAMIBIA IN KEEPING WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE PROPOSAL.

7. TAYLOR MENTIONED AN ARTICLE IN THE "SUNDAY TIMES" BY FLEUR DE VILLIERS, APRIL 7, WHICH REPORTED THAT SOUTH AFRICA, WITHIN A WEEK OR SO, WOULD SET A DEADLINE FOR SWAPO ACCEPTANCE. VAN HEERDEN SAID HE HAD READ THE ARTICLE BUT THAT HE KNEW OF NO SUCH PLAN. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ANY SUCH MOVE IN THE NEAR TERM WOULD RAISE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. HE AGREED THAT THE ANGOLAN RAID WOULD INEVITABLY CAUSE SOME DELAY, BUT ASSERTED THAT IT WAS OBVIOUS THE SAG COULD NOT WAIT FOREVER. IT WOULD NOT BE REASONABLE TO EXPECT THE SAG TO STILL BE WAITING "THREE MONTHS FROM NOW" WHILE SWAPO CONTINUES TO CAUCUS IN LUSAKA. HE ASKED WHAT TIME FRAME FOR BRINGING SWAPO AROUND WOULD BE A REASONABLE ONE. TAYLOR REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW BUT REITERATED THAT THE RAID HAD CREATED A NEW SITUATION WHICH WOULD ALLOW SWAPO TO JUSTIFY POSTPONING THE DAY OF DECISION.

8. TAYLOR RAISED AGAIN THE COMPLICATIONS CAUSED BY THE RAID FOR OUR DIPLOMACY WITH THE AFRICAN STATES AND ASKED WHAT STEPS THE SAG MIGHT HAVE IN MIND TO DEMONSTRATE ITS GOOD INTENTIONS. VAN HEERDEN SAID HE HAD BEEN THINKING ALONG THESE LINES AND BELIEVED THAT THE SAG SHOULD HAVE A "WALKING ON TWO LEGS" POLICY (ONE LEG APPARENTLY BEING STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS REAFFIRMING ITS COMMITMENT TO THE PROPOSAL AND THE OTHER A MILITARY POLICY OF RETALIATION). VAN HEERDEN ASKED WHAT IDEAS WE HAD. TAYLOR REPLIED THAT, SPEAKING PERSONALLY AND WITHOUT INSTRUCTION, SEVERAL CONFIDENTIAL

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THINGS OCCURRED TO HIM, INCLUDING RELEASE OF SWAPO DETAINEES AND PRISONERS, THE REPEAL OF THE TERRORIST AND INTERNAL SECURITY ACTS AS APPLICABLE TO SOUTH WEST AFRICA, STEYN'S ASSUMPTION OF POLICE AND JUSTICE RESPONSIBILITIES, AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS REITERATING SOUTH AFRICA'S COMMITMENT TO CARRYING OUT THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT OF THE WESTERN PROPOSAL. VAN HEERDEN SAID HE THOUGHT

IT WAS POSSIBLE SOME OF THESE THINGS WOULD BE DONE. HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO RELEASE TOVIO AND HE HAD "HOPED THE RECENT SWAPO DETAINEES WOULD HAVE BEEN SET FREE ONLY AFTER A SHORT PERIOD." TAYLOR SAID THAT A HIGH-LEVEL STATEMENT AFFIRMING SOUTH AFRICA'S READINESS TO NEGOTIATE THE STATUS OF WALVIS BAY WITH AN INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL. VAN HEERDEN SAID THAT ANYTHING MORE ON THIS WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION. THE PRIME MINISTER, HE EMPHASIZED, WAS ADAMANT ON THE ISSUE. NELSON

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